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ABSTRACT

Two models of content-based second language instruction are compared. The two models, French language immersion and mainstreaming, are illustrated in two case studies that focus on how minority language children fare in kindergarten programs. The first case study is of a native Cantonese-speaking child enrolled in an early French immersion program in Canada. The second describes the experience of a native Turkish-speaking child in a Danish-medium mainstream program in Denmark. In each case, the study itself as well as related studies are summarized. It is concluded that some children's task in kindergarten is greater than others', and that not all children begin on even linguistic playing fields. Dominant group children in mainstream programs and dominant and minority group children in French immersion programs have an easier time than do minority group children in mainstream programs. The last group may not learn the second language well and may not succeed academically, particularly under certain conditions. Contains 49 references. (MSE)

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Beyond *belief*: Variance in models of content-based instruction and school success among minority language learners

Shelley K. TAYLOR

Résumé

Cet article présente des études de cas dans le but de comparer l'efficacité de deux modèles d'enseignement: l'immersion et la submersion (programme où l'enseignement se fait dans la langue majoritaire du pays sans prendre en compte la langue maternelle des étudiants issus de minorités linguistiques ni proposer l'enseignement de la langue majoritaire comme langue seconde). Cette comparaison vise surtout à mettre en évidence, de part et d'autre, la présence ou l'absence de stratégies servant à assurer la compréhension. Les études de cas proposées, l'une au Canada et l'autre au Danemark, évaluent la progression linguistique et scolaire de deux élèves de langue minoritaire inscrits à la maternelle. Elles débouchent sur l'explicitation des raisons qui plaident en faveur de l'immersion.

Overall numbers of minority language students enrolled in public school systems in western countries are growing. Yet, too often, program selection is based more on folk belief about how second languages are learned than on research into optimal instructional models and approaches to schooling these children. The purpose of the present paper is to compare two models of content-based instruction (French immersion and mainstreaming), and to relate them to an optimal approach to schooling: content-based instruction for second language learners.

Discussed are the program models, findings of two case studies which focus on how minority language children fare in Kindergarten programs based on each of the models, and the implications of these studies for future model selection. To begin, I briefly provide contextual information on overall numbers of minority language children currently enrolled in North American and European public school systems, their degree of academic success, and the significance of these findings for model selection.

I. Numbers & school success

1.1. Numbers

The overall number of bi-/multilingual students is growing worldwide: In the United States, there were over two million ESL (English as a Second Language) children in public and private schools in 1994 (PRITCHARD & SPANGENBERG-URBSCHAT, 1994). In California alone, demographic research indicates that over a million students with a mother tongue other than English are now in the

school system (STRYKER & LEAVER, 1997). As for Canada, over 50% of all school-aged children in the largest cities today are speakers of English as a second or subsequent language and research suggests that, by the year 2000, 70% of all school-aged children in Toronto, Canada's largest city, will be minority language speakers (CUMMINS, 1995). As for the European figures, 10% of all school-aged children have, for some years now, come from family backgrounds which reflect neither the language nor the culture of the dominant group in their country of residence (REID & REICH, 1992).

The number of minority language children in Denmark is smaller: An estimated 6% of all school-aged children are DSL (Danish as a Second Language) students (i.e., students for whom Danish is a second or subsequent language) (BØGESKOV, 1995). But as they are unevenly distributed throughout the country, their number appears larger in certain areas: 85% of all DSL students are enrolled in 45 of Denmark's 275 municipalities and, furthermore, 60% of all DSL students are concentrated in just 15 of those 45 municipalities (JUST JEPPESEN, 1995:14). The way these figures translate in larger urban centres such as Copenhagen is as follows: DSL children accounted for 11 to 25% of the school-aged population in nine municipalities in metropolitan Copenhagen in 1993 and, in inner-city Copenhagen, nineteen schools reported a 40% enrolment of DSL students in 1997 (HOLMEN & JØRGENSEN, 1993; Municipality of Copenhagen, 1997:13).

Inasmuch as immigration was discontinued in 1973, these students are either the products of family reunification or are second generation immigrants (i.e., children of the migrant workers of the 1960s) (JUST JEPPESEN, 1995). A large percentage of this DSL population are *Turks*[1]: Regardless of whether "Turks" refers to Turks or Kurds, 7,148 "Turkish" students were enrolled in the Danish public school system in January 1991 (out of a total immigrant school-aged population of 19,825; see Table 1 below).

[1] A great many students registered as "Turks" are in fact Kurds. It is presently estimated that a half million Kurds live in Europe where they settled as guest workers and refugees. Danes and Germans tend to lump all third world immigrants together as "Turks" when discussing the *Turkish problem* (JUST JEPPESEN, 1995); however, as early as 1981, 60-70% of all "Turks" in Denmark were estimated to be Kurds (SKUTNABB-KANGAS, 1981).

Table 1
Immigrant children in the Danish public school system: Figures as of January 1991
(Adapted from HOLMEN & JØRGENSEN, 1993:94)

Donor	Number
Scandinavia	780
EU	876
North America	113
Total	1,769
Turkey	7,148
Pakistan	2,915
ex-Yugoslavia	1,911
Lebanon	1,686
Iran	1,311
Vietnam	1,241
Sri Lanka	966
Morocco	878
Total	18,056

While the number of minority language students in Denmark may appear small in comparison to other European countries, it is nonetheless indicative of how diversity is growing even in places formerly associated with a monolingual/monocultural population. It is also indicative of the significance of appropriate program selection for minority language children as becomes clear with regard to the issue of school success discussed next.

1.2. School success

Regardless of where the growing number of children schooled in a second or subsequent language come from or presently reside, the scenario remains largely unchanged: They tend to experience less school success than their dominant group peers (CUMMINS, 1996; OGBU, 1994; SKUTNABB-KANGAS, 1981). LARA (1994:10) warns that, given the numbers, "low academic achievement among minority students... is cause for concern." Why? They must become the highly literate, computerized workforce of the future and, to achieve that goal, they need higher literacy levels.

Again taking Denmark as an example, while few Danes leave high school without attaining a graduation diploma (3%), almost half of all "Turks" do not graduate (46%) (JUST JEPPESEN,1990:14). Turkish and Kurdish students have the shortest academic careers of all immigrant students, the lowest number of students going on to college preparatory classes (i.e., *Gymnasium*), and the highest degree of difficulty adapting to the Danish school system due to feelings

of *anomie* and low self-esteem (JUST JEPPESEN, 1993; SAHL & SKJELMOSE, 1983). This may be partly attributed to anti-immigrant (particularly anti-Muslim) sentiment, and partly attributed to inappropriate program selection. JUST JEPPESEN (1995:23) of the Danish National Institute for Social Research describes anti-Turkish prejudice in present-day Denmark as strong, and the climate towards "Turkish" DSL students as inhospitable. While schools cannot cure all social ills, they can focus on issues within their domain, issues such as program selection. Clearly, instructional models which counteract the poor success rates noted above need to be selected. Models which do (not) promote school success in minority language children are outlined next.

II. Instructional models & approaches

Discussed in this section are two program models and their component parts (e.g., instructional strategies), the relationship between the models, and an optimal approach to content-based instruction.

2.1. Program models

Two models are of note: French immersion and mainstream programs.

2.1.1. French immersion programs

Johnson and Swain (1997) suggest that immersion programs are often characterized in the following manner:

- the use of the second language (L2), a language of power, as a medium of instruction,
- the immersion curriculum parallels the local (L1) curriculum,
- overt support exists for the L1,
- the goal of the program is to develop additive bilingualism,
- exposure to the L2 is confined to the classroom,
- students enter with similar (& limited) levels of L2 proficiency,
- teachers are bilingual,
- the classroom culture is that of the local L1 community.

Based on the characteristics listed above, it can be said that students' L1 and L2 development is a strong consideration in immersion program design. I refer back to these characteristics when discussing how characteristics of mainstream programs differ from these, and how immersion characteristics vary when discussing minority language populations.

2.1.2. Mainstream programs

While mainstream classrooms are the norm in the west (PRITCHARD & SPANGENBERG-URBSCHAT, 1994), they are not designed with minority language children in mind; they are designed for native speakers of the dominant language (e.g., English in English-Canada and the United States, and Danish in Denmark). Using Johnson and Swain's characteristics of immersion programs as a point of comparison, the following outlines how mainstream programs differ from immersion programs:

- the dominant group's L1, a language of power, is used as a medium of instruction, both for dominant group children for whom it is an L1 and for minority language children for whom it is an L2,
- the mainstream curriculum is the local (L1) curriculum,
- overt support exists for the L1 of dominant group children, but not for minority language children's L1 — they may receive covert L1 support if bilingual classroom assistants work in their classrooms, but that occurs relatively rarely,
- the goal of the program is to develop strong L1 skills in dominant group children and subtractive bilingualism in minority language children (see WONG FILLMORE, 1991b),
- exposure to the dominant language (minority language children's L2) occurs in the classroom and in broader society,
- students do not enter with similar levels of proficiency in the language of instruction which is the L1 of some (dominant group children) and the L2 of others (minority language children): dominant group children enter school fully proficient in the language of instruction (their L1), and minority language children enter with varying degrees of (L2) proficiency,
- teachers are unilingual; to serve the needs of all of their minority language learners, teachers would need to be multilingual, not bilingual,
- the official classroom culture is that of the local L1 (dominant group) community.

This brief summary alone suggests how minority language students are not well served in mainstream programs designed with another population in mind. Indeed, CAMERON, MOON & BYGATE (1996) note that mainstream teachers bristle at the suggestion that they must attend to learners' L2 needs (e.g., in the way of L2 development). Such attention is seen as a "threat" to their real job: the job of teaching and planning curriculum — for dominant group learners.

2.2. Relationship between the two models

A key difference between the two programs is the degree to which L2 learners' needs are recognized and addressed. Another difference is whether *French immersion strategies* are included or excluded. CURTAIN & PESOLA (1988:87-89) include the following under the rubric *French immersion strategies*:

- the use of contextual clues (gestures, facial expressions, body language, and concrete referents such as props, regalia, manipulative and visuals),
- hands-on, experiential activities,
- linguistic modifications to make the new language more comprehensible in the beginning stages (e.g., controlled vocabulary, sentence length and sentence complexity; slower speech rate, repetition and rephrasing/expanding on student utterances),
- teacher monitoring of student comprehension by frequent comprehension checks which require students to give nonverbal responses, personalizing questions, and using a variety of question types.

There is much overlap between strategies such as the above which are deemed characteristic of an immersion approach, and strategies deemed lacking in mainstream classrooms. HARKLAU (1994) claims that mainstream programs fail their minority language speakers because these programs do not provide immersion-like instructional strategies, strategies which make adjustments for the presence of minority language children. HARKLAU (1994:249) suggests that these strategies are lacking "because [teachers primarily address] native speakers of English, mainstream... classroom teachers seldom [adjust] input in order to make it comprehensible to L2 learners."

Strategic adjustments which HARKLAU (1994:249) considers appropriate for making input comprehensible to L2 learners, and which resemble French immersion strategies, include: "reducing the speed and complexity of speech, increasing repetition, pausing, and [conducting] comprehension checks; and contextualizing abstract concepts through the use of realia such as maps or photos, graphs, or graphic organizers such as webbing have been identified as necessary in order to make input useful as raw material for language learning." Mainstream classrooms which do not provide these adjustments or supports are described as sink-or-swim (*submersion*) environments (LESSOW-HURLEY, 1996).

To summarize then, HARKLAU (1994) suggests that adjustments are lacking in mainstream classrooms because teachers only focus on the needs of dominant group children. She credits this oversight to the (flawed) premise, rooted in folk

belief, on which mainstream programs are based: that L2 learners learn faster when surrounded by native speakers no matter what instructional strategies are employed[2]. This may be explained in terms of the *maximum exposure* hypothesis.

This hypothesis holds that "maximum exposure" is necessary for minority language children to learn an L2 (CUMMINS, 1989; CUMMINS & SWAIN, 1986). While intuitively appealing and very pervasive in Denmark, a strong body of research indicates that minority language children require years to learn an L2 (COLLIER, 1987; CUMMINS, 1996; HOLMEN, 1994). Research also indicates that, while mainstream classrooms have the potential to be good L2 learning contexts, they often do not meet their potential (WONG FILLMORE, 1991a). One way for them to meet their potential is by including immersion strategies, or what PEREGOY & BOYLE (1997) refer to as *sheltering techniques*. These are discussed next, along with content-based instruction.

2.3. A content-based instructional approach

Various methodological approaches have been recommended to meet the needs of increasingly diverse student populations. One such methodological approach is content-based instruction. In California where, as noted, the number of minority language children is skyrocketing, one model of content-based instruction, *sheltered* instruction, has been officially embraced "as the most efficient approach for transitioning children who speak English as a second language into English-only classrooms" (STRYKER & LEAVER, 1997:16)[3]. This raises the question of what is content-based instruction (including *sheltered* instruction), and what delivery issues are associated with it. These questions are addressed next.

2.3.1. What is content-based instruction & what does it entail?

GENESEE (1993:48) observes that, for the past two decades, the trend has been to integrate language and content. This trend has variously been referred to as communicative, integrative and content-based approaches to language teaching, a trend which stems from the more general trend in Applied Linguistics to view language learning as most effective when used for "communication in

2 CAMERON, MOON & BYGATE (1996) concur, adding that folk belief also holds that minority and majority language students should not be separated even if keeping the two groups together in mainstream classrooms works to the detriment of minority language children's L2 development.

3 Contrary to STRYKER & LEAVER's (1997:16) wholesale endorsement of content-based instruction which features sheltered instruction as "the most efficient approach for transitioning children who speak English as a second-language into English-only classrooms," I only believe that this is true if good bilingual education programs are not a viable option. Reasons for this opinion are raised in the discussion (Part IV).

meaningful, purposeful social and academic contexts" (SNOW, MET & GENESEE, 1989:202). That is the main rationale for content-based instruction. Other rationales include:

- Language is a tool to help students make sense of their world (SNOW, MET & GENESEE; 1989).
- Content provides a meaningful, substantive basis for language learning. As such it is motivational, and provides cognitive "pegs" for hanging language learning (CURTAIN & PESOLA, 1988).
- Language use is characterized by different registers and genres. Therefore, students should be exposed to formal and informal language, and subject-specific genres (KRUEGER & RYAN, 1993).
- The time factor — integrating language and content instruction justifies offering second and international languages as subjects which can compete with all of the other subjects vying for students' class time. When language and content instruction are integrated, language teaching is more clearly seen as contributing to students' general education (LEBLANC, 1990).

Characteristics of content-based instruction which features sheltering techniques are summarized by Peregoy and Boyle (1997) as follows:

- theme-based, content learning in minority language children's L2,
- learners are not mixed in with mother tongue speakers of the L2,
- instruction is made comprehensible by incorporating strategies,
- simultaneous access to core curriculum and L2 instruction,
- the cognitive load is adjusted to meet L2 learners' needs, but the cognitive level is grade appropriate.

As noted, CURTAIN & PESOLA (1988) equate sheltering strategies with French immersion strategies (see 2.2). Indeed, French immersion has been referred to as an ideal content-based instruction program because of its incorporation of immersion or *sheltering* strategies for L2 teaching, and its use of the children's L2 as a medium of content instruction (e.g., KRASHEN, 1984). That is, most often French immersion programs combine second language learning and content instruction and mainstream programs do not. However, even content-based instruction designed with L2 learners in mind is no panacea. It too is experiencing growing pains as delivery issues still require attention.

2.3.2. What delivery issues are associated with content-based instruction?

Two issues are of note. The first concerns planning and the second concerns supporting students' identity development while they catch up linguistically and academically. With regard to the first issue, researchers who have worked in the

area of content-based instruction and are highly supportive of the approach are quick to note that planning is a key issue. In the past, researchers such as KRASHEN (1984) argued that the only thing needed for incidental vocabulary learning to occur in content-based programs such as French immersion was for content instruction to be offered via the medium of a second language. Researchers such as ESKEY (1997), MOHAN (1986), SWAIN (1996) and WONG FILLMORE (1991a), however, strongly urge that language planning be a major part of program delivery. Otherwise, as ALLEN, SWAIN, HARLEY & CUMMINS (1990:74) explain: "the classroom context may provide little opportunity for students to produce the full range of target language forms." This supports CAMERON, MOON & BYGATE (1996), HARKLAU (1994) and WONG FILLMORE's (1991a) claim that exposure alone does not suffice for minority language children to be successful in second language learning, and undermines folk belief in mainstream programs as *ideal* sites for L2 learning.

ESKEY (1997) raises a further area of concern, that of minority language learners' unfamiliarity with the culture they encounter in mainstream classrooms. CUMMINS (1996) addresses a similar concern, but from the viewpoint of student identity formation: He suggests that techniques and strategies associated with content-based instruction will only be effective to the extent that students feel affirmed in their learning environments. Thus, a major component of program delivery in any program model must be "a relationship of respect and affirmation" which comes from students feeling that "their teachers believe in them and expect them to succeed in school and life" (CUMMINS, 1996:74).

To affirm students' identities, CUMMINS (1996) recommends that teachers:

1. activate and build on students' prior knowledge by linking program content to student realities (e.g., their L1 and home culture) rather than only focussing on the local (dominant group) L1 and culture in the classroom,
2. present cognitively engaging input with appropriate contextual supports by adjusting the cognitive load to meet L2 learners' needs (e.g., by using *sheltering* techniques and stressing key concepts), but keeping the cognitive level grade appropriate,
3. encourage active language use to connect input with students' prior experience and thematically-related content by attaching new concepts to pre-existing cognitive "pegs" (e.g., linking curriculum based on dominant group culture to minority language children's home cultures and languages), and

4. assess student learning in order to provide feedback that will build language awareness and efficient learning strategies. CHAMOT & O'MALLEY (1994), and BRINTON & MASTER (1997) describe strategies that L2 learners can develop to monitor their learning style and progress, strategies which encourage children to become active learners rather than to 'tune out' whenever the cognitive load exceeds their L2 proficiency [4].

ESKEY (1997) notes that delivery issues such as described above have been minimized in the haste with which content-based instruction for L2 learners has been adopted, yet he stresses that these issues must be addressed. Both issues are revisited later in this paper. To summarize, French immersion programs are prime examples of content-based instruction and, despite their flaws, they are still more likely to meet minority language children's needs than are mainstream programs. The main advantage which immersion programs have over mainstream programs is a dual focus on L2 and content learning. Mainstream programs tend to have a more unidimensional focus: Content drives the course which often leads to minority language students' L2 needs being neglected. To test this claim, two case studies are examined in Part III, one with a French immersion and one with a mainstream focus, to see which study better meets the needs of the minority language learners involved[5].

III. Two case studies

The first case study describes how a minority language child, a Cantonese-speaker, fared in an early French immersion program in Canada. Also discussed are why he fared as he did, and whether the results are replicable. The second describes how a Kurdish-speaking child fared in a Danish-medium mainstream program in Denmark.

3.1. Victor: A case study of a Cantonese-speaking child in a French immersion Kindergarten program

In this study, I investigated how a minority language child was faring in an immersion program designed for dominant group children. Characteristics of immersion programs (outlined by JOHNSON & SWAIN, 1997) which do not pertain to minority language children include:

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[4] HARKLAU (1994:241) credits minority language students' "tuning out" content lessons to the way lessons are presented (as incomprehensible input) in mainstream programs, and to the fact that L2 students are mainstreamed "long before they develop the degree of language proficiency necessary to compete on an equal footing with native speakers of the school language."

[5] For fuller versions of the two following case studies, refer to TAYLOR (1992) and TAYLOR (1997).

1. there is no overt support for minority language children's L1 development in French immersion as only the L1 of dominant group (anglophone) children receives support,
2. the goal of the program is not to develop additive bilingualism in minority language children as their L1 never becomes a medium of instruction, and
3. their teachers are English-French bilinguals, not bilinguals in French and the minority language children's L1. Still, the advantage to immersion programs is that they are based on the premise of linking second language and content instruction. Thus, provisions are made for L2 learners, provisions such as *sheltering* of instruction; provisions not made in mainstream programs.

A summary of the study follows as do summaries of additional studies which support French immersion as a programmatic option capable of promoting academic success in minority language children.

3.1.1. The study

This case involves *Victor*, a Cantonese child in early French immersion. I observed his academic progress for the year that I was his Senior Kindergarten classroom teacher in an inner-city school in a major Canadian city. I also observed him one day per week when he was in Gr. 1. Three research questions guided my observations:

1. How is Victor doing academically, socially and linguistically (in English, French and Cantonese)?,
2. How has he adapted psychologically to a situation of double immersion (i.e., learning English and French simultaneously)? and
3. What societal influences are shaping him?

Beside participant observation, my other data collection techniques included interviews, and formal and informal measures. I interviewed Victor's classmates, mother, Gr. 1 and Junior Kindergarten teachers, and his principal. A fellow French immersion teacher informally evaluated Victor's French, and two graduate students, one a speaker of Mandarin and one a speaker of Cantonese, interviewed Victor to see which variety of Chinese he spoke and to assess his proficiency in it. They found Victor's French and Cantonese to be well developed for a child of his age. An informal measure of academic achievement, the "ABC Report" (a kindergarten evaluation used by the local school board), confirmed that Victor was progressing well in academic, artistic, physical and sociopsychological development, a finding which confirmed reports by Victor's Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten, and Gr. 1 teachers.

I also administered two formal measures of French proficiency, the *French Immersion Achievement Test* (i.e., the FIAT by WORMELI & ARDENAZ, 1987), a standardized French immersion test of mathematical and French skills, and two versions of the *French immersion comprehension test* (BARIK 1975 & 1976). Victor scored in the "normal" range in math on the FIAT, and in the "below average" range on the FIAT word identification section [6]. He also did well on the Senior Kindergarten (Primer) version of the *French immersion comprehension test*, but the Level 1 score proved invalid as it was administered three months too early at a very crucial stage in an immersion child's French development: Gr. 1. I also administered the *Vineland Adaptive Scale* to Victor's mother and teacher (SPARROW, BALLA & CICCHETTI, 1984a & 1984b). Findings on the latter measure indicated that Victor was behaving in a more mature manner in class than at home: on the school measure, he was ranked at 8 years/6 months; on the home measure, he was ranked at 6 years. His mother noted that he is the youngest of three siblings, and she tends to "baby" him.

These findings indicated that Victor was doing well in all three languages, succeeding academically and socially, and was well adjusted to double immersion in school. The major societal influence shaping him was the school environment, particularly his peer group. Victor was developing conversational proficiency in English despite being in French immersion. That boded well for how he would succeed when required to function in academic English starting in Grade 4[7]. Had he not been in French immersion, he would have had to function in academic English immediately (e.g., reading instruction), before gaining conversational proficiency in English. Based on that, I deemed French immersion to be a better alternative for Victor — and other minority language children. How and why this may be the case are discussed next.

3.1.2. Sheltering *provisions in French immersion*

WEBER & TARDIF (1990) describe how Senior Kindergarten children are initiated into the learning of French in an early French immersion (EFI) classroom. Their description suggests that an EFI classroom is a supportive environment for both majority and minority language children who learn French as an L2 or L3. How? Language learning is facilitated by their teacher's

[6] That Victor scored in the "below average" range on the FIAT word identification section did not alarm me. I had used the *FIAT* when I was a French immersion Special Education teacher, and almost every child tested scored in the "below average" range on that measure, which led me to question how it had been normed.

[7] See CUMMINS (1996) for detailed discussion of conversational and academic second language proficiency.

paralanguage (gestures, body movement, intonation and expression) and by concrete materials, pictures, symbols, and rituals.

Why is this approach successful? Advantages for minority language students in an EFI classroom (v. in a mainstream classroom) are:

- the cognitive load is not beyond them as it is in a mainstream program designed with dominant language speakers in mind,
- they start learning French on a linguistic playing field which is level with that of their dominant group peers, also rank beginners in French, and
- they acquire language with the aid of sheltering provisions (i.e., *teacher-scaffolding*).

WEBER & TARDIF (1990:58) use the term *teacher-scaffolding* to describe how immersion teachers, as the children's sole language models, must provide *expert support* by way of extensive use of paralanguage and concrete materials, and "[orchestrate] things so that the situation speaks for itself". LENZ, BULGREN & HUDSON (1990:125) elaborate on the concept of *teacher-scaffolding*: "*Expert support* is provided by the teacher during the early stages of learning but is faded as instruction proceeds and as the student becomes successful and assumes the primary responsibility for learning." Although LENZ, BULGREN & HUDSON use the concept in another context, it applies equally well in the EFI context where pupils gradually gain proficiency in French and the teacher is required to provide less and less paralinguistic *expert support*. This is more likely to characterize an immersion than a mainstream Senior Kindergarten setting due to differences in necessity: The majority of pupils who enrol in mainstream Senior Kindergarten programs already speak the dominant language (e.g., English in English-Canada) whereas virtually none of the pupils speak French upon entry into a Canadian EFI Senior Kindergarten classroom.

Research also supports mid-immersion as a viable alternative for minority language children. The following studies outline the success which minority language children encounter in these programs, which begin later than EFI programs.

3.1.3. Additional research studies

Other research results also support French immersion as a viable programmatic alternative for minority language children. SWAIN & LAPKIN (1991) review two studies involving minority language children in a middle French immersion program in Toronto. In the first study reviewed, that of BILD & SWAIN (1989), the children were in Gr. 5: their first year in half-day, middle immersion. Prior

to that, they had received core French instruction for a short amount of time each day. In the Gr. 5 study, the minority language children outscored their anglophone peers on grammatical measures in spite of being from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. This held true for minority language children from Romance and non-Romance language backgrounds.

In the second study (based on SWAIN, LAPKIN, ROWEN & HART, 1991), minority language children in the same middle French immersion program as just described were followed in Gr. 8. The researchers sought to replicate the results of the previous study as well as to investigate the role of L1 literacy on L1 proficiency and other side-effects of L1 literacy such as whether it might influence the minority language children's learning of French. The researchers found the children's L1 literacy to have a generalized positive effect on learning French, an effect that was tied to L1 literacy, not fluency. Romance background minority language children outperformed non-Romance background minority language peers, but there was limited statistical difference between the two groups — just on measures of fluency and global comprehension. SWAIN & LAPKIN (1991) suggest that, taken together, these two studies indicate that years spent gaining L1 literacy skills in International Language programs[8] pay off in terms of French proficiency, giving minority language students an advantage over anglophone peers in French immersion.

These studies suggest that the positive results found in Victor's case may well be replicable. Despite positive findings such as these, negative opinions regarding who should be included or excluded from French immersion programs often define program enrolment. While some negative opinions are based on beliefs about who will benefit most from immersion, others are intended to dissuade proponents of so-called *English immersion* (i.e., immersion in mainstream classrooms=*submersion*) from using positive results based on studies such as those reviewed in SWAIN & LAPKIN (1991) and conducted by myself (TAYLOR, 1992) as a basis to argue for *English-only immersion* [9]. A

[8] International Language programs refer to the minority language courses which are taught in the Canadian city where the *Victor* study was conducted. Different school districts are in operation in different parts of the city. Districts offer from 14 to 36 minority languages ranging from Albanian to Yoruba. Some are taught at the Elementary, and some at the Secondary level, either after school, on Saturday or, in one part of the city, are integrated into the regular school day.

[9] BRINTON, SNOW & WESCHE (1989) state that immersion programs are not appropriate for minority language speakers in Canadian French immersion programs, then explain why: They make the analogy that, in the American context, neither is *English-only immersion* appropriate for minority language children. Therefore, their purpose in dismissing French immersion as a programmatic option for minority language children is to argue against placing minority language children in "English-only immersion" programs, programs which amount to *submersion* (or mainstreaming minority language students before they are ready to handle English-medium instruction, and providing them with little or no ESL support).

study examining why *English*- or, in this case, *Danish-only immersion* does not necessarily lead to academic success for minority language learners follows next.

3.2. Deniz: A case study of a Kurdish-speaking child in a mainstream Kindergarten program

In this study, I investigated how a minority language child fared in a mainstream Kindergarten classroom in Denmark. Why he fared as he did is also examined, with particular emphasis on whether sheltered instruction was provided. A summary of the study follows.

3.2.1. The study

This case involved *Deniz*, a Kurdish child in a mainstream classroom in Denmark. He was enrolled in the school in which I conducted an eighteen-month long, classroom-based, ethnographic case study. I mainly observed two older cohorts enrolled in a bilingual education program which was discontinued in favour of a quota-system. In accordance with the new system, no more than one-third of all children enrolled in any cohort could be DSL-speakers. Deniz' program fell under the quota-system.

I examined his case to investigate whether the quota-system, based on the *maximum exposure* hypothesis, showed potential advantages over its predecessor: the previous bilingual education program. I observed Deniz once a week over a month-long period. Three research questions guided my observations:

1. Was comprehensible input provided in Danish, through high-quality DSL and sheltered subject matter teaching?,
2. Was there subject-matter teaching in Deniz' L1 (Kurdish) without translation?, and
3. Was literacy in Kurdish being developed, literacy which could later be transferred to Danish?

The questions targeted aspects of "good bilingual programs" such as identified by KRASHEN (1996) since, for folk belief in mainstream programs to be substantiated, such programs must surely be as good or better than bilingual education programs (e.g., French immersion). Other data collection techniques

CUMMINS (1996:221) considers equating "English-only immersion" in the American context with Canadian French immersion programs as *disinformation*: "If not an attempt at disinformation, how can we explain arguments for monolingual English-only education based on the success of bilingual programs, whose goal is bilingualism and biliteracy, and which are taught by bilingual teachers?" Thus, it is not inconceivable that proponents of English-only immersion programs might use positive results involving minority language students in French immersion to their own ends even though the two programs are incomparable in most regards (see HARKLAU, 1994).

included interviews and document analysis. I interviewed Deniz' Danish lead teacher and his Kurdish bilingual support teacher. I also interviewed many others and examined a wide range of documents as part of my ongoing work with the two older cohorts[10]. Findings related to the research questions are as follows.

With regard to whether the first component of "good bilingual education programs" was evident; namely, whether *comprehensible input* was provided in Danish (Deniz' L2) through high quality DSL and sheltered subject matter teaching: no. Input was not comprehensible, there was no DSL component, and there was no sheltered subject matter teaching. Generally, the Kurdish children were unable to comprehend their Danish teacher. She stood at the front of the classroom, and directed her lessons and explanations to the ability level of the children for whom Danish was their L1. She did not provide any more linguistic and cognitive supports for the DSL children than one normally would with children for whom the language of instruction was their native-language. Nor did she use any of the (immersion) teaching strategies recommended by CURTAIN & PESOLA (1988), HARKLAU (1994), or WEBER & TARDIF (1990) for rank beginners in an L2. The teacher did not use any paralinguistic prompts or cues, and the bilingual classroom support teacher never "took the floor" during lesson time. At the end of a month of participant/observation (from Week 2 to Week 6 of a new school year), I noted that Deniz and the other Kurdish children were still not singing along to the music, not even to songs with visual accompaniments (e.g., "If you're happy and you know it clap your hands" ["*Er du sur og triste min ven, så klap hænderne*"]). Their participation in the physical component of the song varied from child to child, but was limited overall.

There was also no DSL support, and no sheltered teaching strategies were used. The teacher knew that Deniz and his peers would no longer have a bilingual classroom support teacher available on a full-time basis at the end of Kindergarten and, therefore, stated that she felt it was her duty to prepare them for Gr. 1. To do so, she purposely did not provide them with any more

10 My interviewees included Ministry of Education officials, an immigrant representative on the Advisory Board to the Minister of the Interior, representatives of two Kurdish political parties, the two Danish home room teachers and two Turkish teachers attached to the cohorts, other teachers (such as those mentioned in the Kindergarten focus), the principal, Danish, Turkish and Kurdish students in both cohorts, and Danish, Turkish and Kurdish parents in their homes. I also conducted extensive document analysis, collecting policy documents from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of the Interior, the Danish Office of Civil Rights, research documents by Danish experts in minority issues, reports produced on the Bilingual/Bicultural program in the school board where I did my study (including some written by teacher participants), pedagogical materials written by some of the teacher participants as well as their course papers, samples of children's work and texts, etc.

explanations or supports than she gave the Danish children because she wanted the DSL children to develop their own strategies for listening, learning and coping, strategies that they could fall back on when they would be on their own.

With regard to whether the second component of "good bilingual education programs" was evident; namely, whether subject matter teaching was conducted in the minority language children's L1 (Kurdish), without translation?: no. An example of a typical lesson, and the sole use of Danish throughout, is as follows. At the Kindergarten level, subject matter teaching mainly amounts to the lesson portion of the morning. A typical lesson at this level is for children to draw a picture of themselves. The Danish teacher assigned that very task. The children were also instructed to design and fill in a simple bar graph showing their age at the bottom of the page. For the DSL speakers, the task was daunting, given the incomprehensibility of the explanations.

The bilingual support teacher only provided minimal support during the lesson as, he stated in his interview, part of his job description was to focus on the majority language children. The school administration was concerned that Danish children should not feel as though the Kurdish teacher was only available to the minority language children. Therefore, he felt that he had to focus his attention on both groups of children and provide an example of being *integrated*. In practice, that generally translated into his concentrating on the Danish, not the Kurdish, children. The following example illustrates this point as well as the overall incomprehensibility of content matter teaching in Deniz' L2 (Danish).

On one particular day, I observed Deniz closely during lesson time. The lesson was based on vocabulary for parts of the face. The first part of the children's task was to draw four ovals on a standard-size sheet of white paper. They then had to draw pictures in the ovals: three of their classmates and one of themselves. No key visuals were shown during the Danish teacher's explanation of the task.

During activity time, it became clear that Deniz had not understood the teachers' verbal explanation (in Danish) of the task or the body parts; neither did two Kurdish girls sitting within my range of vision. Not knowing what to do, Deniz simply scribbled on the page. It took the Danish teacher quite some time to notice what Deniz was doing. As for the bilingual classroom support teacher, he spent more time on his *integration* duties (e.g., speaking Danish and being available to the Danish children), than on monitoring the Kurdish children's comprehension level or progress in task completion. By the time the Danish

teacher noticed what Deniz was doing, and came over to explain some basic vocabulary (e.g., *næse* [nose]) — which Deniz had not understood in the first place and continued not to understand in that brief, one on one, session — the lesson was almost over. At that point, the teacher looked exasperated and brought closure to the lesson.

Finally, with regard to whether literacy was being developed in Kurdish, literacy which could later be transferred to Danish: no. Very few schools in Denmark offer Kurdish mother tongue classes. Kurdish L1 instruction was not offered in Deniz' school. Therefore, his chances for developing mother tongue literacy in Kurdish were negligible. Like the majority of his Kurdish peers, Deniz was eligible to receive three hours per week of "mother tongue" instruction in Turkish as of Gr. 1 even though he knew no Turkish, and Turkish and Kurdish are from different language families[11]. Nonetheless, Deniz would be enrolled in the same "mother tongue" program as children who were native speakers of Turkish as of Gr. 1, thus placing him in the position of being required to learn and function academically in one new language in Kindergarten (Danish) and another in Gr. 1 (Turkish).

Thus, in summary, sheltering techniques were not provided, and Deniz was not faring well in this example of content-based instruction. Why he fared so poorly is discussed next.

IV. Discussion

HARKLAU's (1994:249) observation that "mainstream... classroom teachers seldom [adjust] input in order to make it comprehensible to L2 learners" applies to Deniz' Danish classroom teacher's approach, an approach which led Deniz to "tune out" when the cognitive load exceeded his L2 proficiency (see 2.3.2). Furthermore, Deniz' classroom environment only stressed what he did not know, not what he knew; both his L1 and home culture were ignored. To use CUMMINS' (1996:74) terms, Deniz was not affirmed in his learning environment although identity affirmation has been identified as a key delivery issue when teaching content subjects.

Neither was second language learning a focal point in his mainstream program. Thus, the second delivery issue in content-based teaching (i.e., carefully planning and structuring L2 teaching and learning) was also ignored. Deniz' Senior Kindergarten program was not a content-based instructional

[11] SKUTNABB-KANGAS & BUCAK (1995) discuss difficulties involved in gaining recognition for Kurdish L1 instruction both inside and outside of Turkey, including Denmark.

program for L2 learners as the entire L2 component was ignored. Deniz was indeed exposed to his L2, but it was incomprehensible as sheltering techniques were not used. Thus, he received the same instruction as his dominant group peers, but not equal instruction.

Victor also received the same instruction as his dominant group peers, but it was equal in quality to that which they received. That is, both dominant and minority language students were able to understand content teaching in French, their L2 or L3, because their teachers assumed that French immersion strategies were necessary for all students to understand the lessons. This assumption is not shared by mainstream teachers who gear their instruction to the language proficiency level of dominant group students: As noted, many mainstream teachers do not assume that it is their job to accommodate the L2 developmental needs of minority language students (CAMERON, MOON & BYGATE, 1996).

The whole issue of *same but not equal* instruction sparked the initial debate on (and introduction of) bilingual education programs in the United States. In a landmark decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the Lau v. NICHOLS (1974) case that:

There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education... We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful. (LESSOW-HURLEY, 1996:124)

When the introduction of bilingual education programs such as French immersion is not a viable option, content-based instructional programs with a bonafide second language focus are laudable substitutes as, STRYKER & LEAVER (1997) note, has been decided upon in California where the number and needs of minority language students are great. Content-based instructional programs with an L2 focus are also necessary in settings where the number of minority language students is small, settings such as Denmark. Wherever there are minority language students, programs which promote their educational success are needed. Minority language students cannot succeed in programs which provide incomprehensible content matter teaching. The review of Deniz' case suggests that mainstream programs which ignore minority language children's L1 and home culture, and do not foster L2 development, can fall into the latter category despite folk belief in their effectiveness. Since the number of minority language children and their academic underachievement are growing,

and since research suggests that mainstream programs are largely the norm in the west, there is truly cause for alarm, as was noted at the beginning of this paper (LARA, 1994; PRITCHARD & SPANGENBERG-URBSCHAT, 1994).

V. Conclusion

The two studies reviewed in this paper indicate that some children's task in "doing Kindergarten" is much greater than others'. Not all children are on level "linguistic playing fields" (TAAFFE, MAGUIRE & PRINGLE, 1996). Dominant group children in mainstream programs, and dominant and minority group children in French immersion programs, have an easier time of doing schooling than do children like Deniz. Minority language children enrolled in mainstream programs in which sheltering techniques or other adjustments to ensure L2 learners' understanding of content matter are not provided may not learn their L2 very well and may not succeed academically. Yet, the stakes are too high to allow this situation to perpetuate itself: The number of minority language students enrolled in western school systems and their low success rates are growing.

CUMMINS (1996:222-226) describes a situation of diminishing returns whereby what was previously considered to be the minority's problem is fast becoming the majority's problem as everyone has a common interest in the future of society. He notes that everybody's standard of living is interconnected and is tied to how effectively society and schooling function. Therefore, effective programs are everyone's concern as students who do not meet school success do not fade away; if they end up on welfare or in jail, society does not get the literate workforce which it needs, which we all need. Thus, it is not just the job of the English-as-a-second-language teacher to focus on minority language students' L2 development; it is all teachers' job to do so. Similarly, the selection of appropriate instructional models for minority language learners is everyone's concern. There is no room for complacency where school success is concerned.

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